

Maryland Department of the Environment

Review of Water Quality Standards – Summary

January 2012

Water quality standards (WQS) regulations pertaining to designated uses, criteria, and antidegradation policy are considered and reviewed on an ongoing basis by staff in the Science Services Administration. The current review of WQS (limited in scope to one regulation) was formally initiated with a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking with proposed amendments published in the Maryland Register. A 30-day comment period was given and a comment/response document completed and published on MDE's website. Notice of Final Action was published in the Maryland Register.

Notice of Proposed Action

On January 13, 2012, MDE published Notice of Proposed Action to amend its water quality standards. Based on stakeholder input and internal discussions, MDE proposed changes to the following regulations:

- 26.08.02.03-3 (Water Quality Criteria Specific to Designated Uses)
 - Establish a 2% restoration variance for the Eastern Bay Mesohaline (EASMH) segment.
 - Increase the restoration variance for the Lower Chester River Mesohaline (CHSMH) from 14% to 16% non-attainment by volume and duration and move (recodify) this subparagraph to the appropriate paragraph.

Notice of Final Action

On March 23, 2012, MDE published Notice of Final Action, amending its water quality standards. All regulations were adopted **as proposed**. The effective date of the revised standards is April 2, 2012.